"TA-TAO," THE NEWEST MODERN DANCE, IS VERY OLD

Chinese Music and Steps Now Rival the Argentine Maxixe in Popular Favor at the Fashionable Trotteries

ANOTHER new modern dance has come to claim the attention of the devotees in fashionable society of the one step, the hesitation, the tango and the maxixe. It is called the "Ta-Tao," and is as Chinese as a laundry ticket.

The Castles, those apostles of the modern dance craze, are responsible for its appearance. Already it has begun to spread beyond the confines of Castle House and the exclusive domain of the Castle School of Dancing, for they are dancing it in Newport, or at least a sort of imitation of it, and doubtless in the near future will have the real thing.

At present it is claimed that the only genuine and 100 per cent. pure "Ta-Tao" is to be seen at the Castle Summer House in Luna Park. At any rate, the Castles imported the music from China, where, so it is claimed, the original music was dug up in a temple where it had been calmly reposing for thousands of years awaiting its ultimate fate of stirring the languid digestion of bald headed millionaires and captivating the fancy of girls with slit skirts.

The music is certainly Chinese to a degree. By rights it should have an orchestra of tom-toms to do it full justice. After the Castles secured this gem of harmony, so the story runs, it was something of a white elephant on their hands until they were able to get the original Chinese music with its twenty-seven notes translated into the music of our day and Luna Park with its meagre eight notes. This was probably quite a task; however, it was accomplished, and the Castles became possessed of four copies, two of which they took to Europe with them, one they turned over to a company making phonograph records and the fourth they left at the Castle school with Miss Hubbell, its manager. None others are in existence, as the edition was absolutely limited, so don't waste time and postage writing for sample or professional copies.

It is stated at Castle House that the "Ta-Tao" is a geisha dance, but how a geisha dance got from Japan into China several thousands of years ago is not explained. Neither is any information to be had as to what the original music was written on, whether it was on stone tablets or engraved on gold plates or cut on slabs of jade. Mr. Vernon Castle neglected to mention this detail before he sailed away to the other side.

All of which is of little importance really so long as the music is danceable, and those who have tried it say it is. The rhythm is very marked and lends itself admirably to the various steps. One peculiarity of the dance is that the steps are nearly all taken on the heels and the hands are invariably held so that the forefingers are pointing out. This gives a very Chinese effect.

The second movement in the dance is called the Boure step and is shown in one of the accompanying photographs. The partners come together very slowly, touch foreheads, move back and land on their heels.

There are five movements to the dance, which are first done with the partners facing. The girl then turns her back to her partner and does the five movements in that position. Of course this can be kept up indefinitely like the steps in any other dance.

Mrs. Coroun, the manager of the Castle Summer House, says that it is not at all a difficult dance to learn, in fact much easier than the tango or the maxixe, and it also has the advantage of being suitable for ballroom dancing or for exhibition work.

Besides the Boure, the other favorite step in it is the Flirtation step, in which the man holds the girl's wrists and looks over her shoulder, something as it is done in the maxixe.

Another dance which is now rapidly gaining popularity is the "Lulu Fado," which is a courtship dance of the Brazilian Indians. A man who had recently come from Brazil and saw it danced at the Castle House the other night said that he had seen it danced many times by the natives and that it was done at Luna Park exactly as they did it so far as steps went. The costumes of course were decidedly different.

There is one figure in which the partners place their hands flat against one another, while the girl pushes the man back. In this she is supposed to be repelling his attempt to kiss her. In another movement they walk a few steps apart, clap their hands, come together again and snap their fingers in each other's faces. This is naturally to show scorn and sounds very rude, but in fact it looks very pretty, the continual clapping of hands and finger snapping having something of the same effect as the castanets in a Spanish dance.

An oddity of the "Ta-Tao."

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Marie Newton with Dart Thorne and Miriam Miner with Benton Grace in the "Ta-Tao."

The start of the "Ta-Tao."

The Brazilian courtship dance, "Lulu Fado."

VISUAL SIGNALLING IN WAR TIME

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cut off by means of a screen or shutter. The mirror was first used for signalling in British India about 1878, but the instrument had no shutter and was constantly getting out of alignment owing to the necessity of moving the mirror itself with a key to make the signals.

Experiments were begun in the United States with a view to overcoming this defect and the American model has the mirror mounted on a separate tripod which is never moved after the range has been found, the signalling being all done with a screen or shutter mounted on a separate tripod. The complete kit consists of two tripods, with carrying case, two mirrors, a screen, a sighting rod and a mirror bar. The total cost of the outfit is about $125.

The mirrors are 4½ inches square, and in the centre of each there is an unsilvered spot, less than a quarter of an inch in diameter, for sighting through. The screen is something like a window blind, the slats opening with the pressure of the thumb and closing again with a retractive spring.

The advantages of the heliograph are its great range, rapidity of operation and the invisibility of the signals except in the range of the station to which they are sent. An expert operator can send from a ten to twenty words a minute, and the message may be read up to thirty miles; under favorable conditions, even further. Its disadvantage is that it can be operated only in sunlight; otherwise it is the most efficient signalling apparatus known for army purposes in daylight.

Owing to the physical and mental exhaustion that results from continuous signalling duty and the constant watching for other stations that may be calling up there are always four men with each instrument and they relieve one another. One of them will do the sending, another the receiving, handling the telescope when necessary. A third man acts as the recorder, calling off the message that is to be sent and taking down the messages received, while the fourth man is the senior officer in charge.

When it is desired to attract the attention of a distant station, the location of which is known approximately, the mirror is turned so as to throw a steady light in that direction until the called station answers. During the transmission of a message if the receiver sees that the sender's mirror is getting out of adjustment he will turn a steady flash on him until answered by a steady flash. The adjustment being satisfactory, the receiver will cut off his flash and the sender will resume his message.

The first thing to do when preparing to send a message to a given station is to draw a bead on it. This is done by looking through the small hole in the centre of the mirror after clamping it to the mirror bar and using the front sight at the other end of the bar.

There are two adjustments on the mirror, one of which revolves it horizontally, and the other turns it at any angle to the sky. Neither of these interferes with the line of sight from the unsilvered spot to the front sight because the mirror turns with this spot as a centre. The object of moving the mirror after the line of sight is found is to get the sun's rays reflected on the front sight in such a manner that the dark place of the unsilvered spot shall fall right on the bead of the front sight. The worm gear that makes these adjustments locks the mirror in position.

During this operation an uninterrupted steady flash is directed toward the distant station, which tells the man there that the instrument is not yet ready for action. The next step is to place the tripod that carries the screen, or shutter, in such a position that it shall intercept this ray of light. This is very easily done, as the image of the sun mirror with the shadow of the sighting rod can be easily seen on the screen.

Everthing is now ready and the sighting rod is turned down, having nothing between the mirror and the screen. As the sun moves the mirror must be adjusted by the tangent screws so as to keep the reflection of the sun on the centre of the screen. This does not interfere with the original alignment of the unsilvered spot and the front sight, so that the flash still goes to the station for which it is intended no matter how much the sun may move while the messages are being sent, but if care has not been taken to get the shadow of this unsilvered spot right on the peep hole that covered the distant station the mirror will get out of line, and the man receiving the message will say so.

The sender stands at the side of the tripod with the screen, his thumb on the button at the side. By pressing this button the leaves of the shutter are opened and a retractive spring closes them again.

Sometimes the sun is in such a position that its reflection cannot be sent in the direction desired with one mirror. In that case two mirrors are used, what is called the station mirror taking the place of the front sight at one end of the mirror bar on the tripod. This station mirror has the same tangent screws for adjustment as the sun mirror.

The sun mirror is then brought into a favorable position, with the mirror bar at an angle to the distant station. By sighting through the unsilvered spot in the sun mirror and turning the tangent screws on the station mirror the unsilvered spot on that mirror is brought to cover the reflection of the distant station, which is seen in the glass. This brings the reflection of the station into line, just as if it were the station itself behind a front sight.

The sun mirror is then turned until the reflection of its shadow spot falls directly on the unsilvered spot in the station mirror, and this shadow spot must be kept there all the time so as to insure an accurate reflection of the sun's rays. The next thing is to place the tripod carrying the screen in position to intercept this reflection, but of course the light is not as bright as it would be when coming directly from a single mirror.

Sometimes it is necessary to send information when no location of a receiving station is known. The station mirror is then released and turned slowly all round the horizon by hand so as to cover every spot where another signal man might be that would forward the message. After sweeping the horizon in this way a couple of times the operator waits to give time for the adjustment of any station that had caught his flash. It is constantly looking for these unexpected calls that is so trying on signal men.

Every message invariably begins with the signal "Hr" or "Anr," and sometimes it may be necessary to inform the distant station how much of a message is about to be sent. "Hr 18," for instance, would mean, "I have eighteen words for you."